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ABSTRACT

This volume was intended to stimulate new thinking about how to restructure a school program to effectively educate students whose native language is not English. It favors calling such students "English Language Learners" (ELLs). The document provides specific examples of how some California schools have improved their educational programs for their ELL students. Part 1 includes descriptions of seven strategies that schools with ELL student populations have used in restructuring their educational communities. They include: (1) creating a school-within-a-school; (2) grouping students by language needs; (3) rewriting/integrating the curriculum; (4) teaching students about their community; (5) re-arranging how time is used; (6) teaching in ad hoc teams; and (7) fortifying grade-level teacher teams. Part 2 offers short descriptions of the efforts of three schools with diverse language populations engaged in restructuring strategies, which serve as a starting place for discussing change strategies, tensions in implementation, and varying school and community contexts. The third part briefly describes other restructuring options that involve the restructuring of student experiences; leadership, management, and governance; and the professional lives of teachers. A list of publications and organizations that can offer restructuring assistance is included. (LMI)

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School-Based Systemic Reform in California

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Volume III: Restructuring Ideas for Schools with Limited English Proficient Students

EA 027 558

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A View from the Bottom Up:

School-Based Systemic Reform in California

Volume III: Restructuring Ideas for Schools with Limited-English Proficient Students

Jorge A. Cuevas
Rose Marie García Fontana

FarWest LABORATORY

Far West Laboratory will join with Southwest Regional Laboratory in 1996 to become WestEd.

For further information or additional copies of this volume, or other volumes in the series "A View From the Bottom Up," please contact:

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Table of Contents

Introduction: Restructuring Ideas for Schools with Limited-English Proficient Students ____ 1

Part 1: An Overview of Restructuring and Seven Ideas to Consider ____ 7

Restructuring Strategy 1: Creating a "School-within-a-school"
Establish mini-schools ____ 15

Restructuring Strategy 2: Grouping Students by Langauge Needs
Provide a well-coordinated bilingual-English language development program ____ 17

Restructuring Strategy 3: Rewriting/ Integrating the School's Curriculum
Develop and implement curriculum integration and enrichment ____ 19

Restructuring Strategy 4: Teaching Students about their Community
Develop and implement a student/ community-based curriculum ____ 21

Restructuring Strategy 5: Re-arranging How Time is Used
Alter the schedule to be more flexible and responsive to students' and teachers' needs ____ 23

Restructuring Strategy 6: Teaching in Ad Hoc Teams
Form teacher teams by their strengths or interests and design a new curriculum ____ 25

Restructuring Strategy 7: Fortifying Grade-Level Teacher Teams
Establish solid grade-level teacher teams ____ 27

Part 2: Challenges and Dilemmas Faced by Three Schools Undertaking Restructuring in Diverse Language Communities ____ 31

Restructuring School #1:
Sanborn Elementary ____ 35

Restructuring School #2:
Carr Intermediate ____ 39

Restructuring School #3:
Glassbrook Elementary ____ 43

Part 3: Other Restructuring Options and Resources ____ 47

Restructuring Student Experiences:
Create positive school experiences that address the whole child ____ 48

Restructuring Leadership, Management and Governance:
Promote collaboration, accountability and shared decision-making ____ 49

Restructuring Leadership, Management and Governance:
Provide parent education and empower the community ____ 50

Restructuring the Professional Life of Teachers:
Implement authentic assessment ____ 51

Restructuring the Professional Life of Teachers:
Offer strategic professional development opportunities ____ 52

Restructuring the Professional Life of Teachers and Student Experiences:
Re-group students ____ 53

Restructuring the Professional Life of Teachers and Student Experiences:
Reform curriculum and instruction ____ 54

Other Resources to Help Plan Schoolwide Changes ____ 55

Selected List of Organizations That Can Offer Restructuring Assistance in Schools with English Language Learners ____ 56

Introduction

Restructuring Ideas for Schools with Limited-English Proficient Students

This document will provide several *specific examples* of how some California schools have improved their educational programs for their Limited-English Proficient (LEP) students. Designed with three parts, Part 1 includes descriptions of several strategies which schools with LEP student populations have used in restructuring their educational communities. Part 2 offers short descriptions of the efforts of three actual schools that are intended as a starting place for discussion about which restructuring strategies may be appropriate to particular situations. This volume concludes with a brief description of other restructuring options and resources (Part 3).

As such, this volume is a thought-provoking "beginning reader" for teachers, parents, paraeducators and administrators working to improve their schools. School practitioners have found this document useful as a sampler of ideas to consider in restructuring, particularly because of the focus on key benefits and issues. Pre-service providers and those who work with beginning teachers have also found this document useful, particularly because of the actual school examples. These three examples serve as a starting place for discussing restructuring strategies, tensions in implementation and varying school/community contexts.

Perceiving Limited-English Proficient students as capable, bright learners

This volume is intended to stimulate new thinking about how to restructure a school program to effectively educate students whose native language is not English. We believe that the very term "Limited-English Proficient" perpetuates a perception that these students are lacking aptitude or motivation. Worse, the label itself may become stigmatizing. For the same reason we would not call an undergraduate with a physics major a "limited physics proficient" student, we recommend a more appropriate classification. Even though "LEP" was used in the title of the document due to its widespread recognition, for this volume we will use a term which is gaining grassroots support: English Language Learners (ELLs).

Choosing the "best" restructuring model

There is no "best model" for restructuring. Each school is a unique community, just as each student is unique. Due to the seemingly endless variables comprising a school community, we believe an eclectic approach that pays attention to context is best. A school's context is not just important — context is everything! In other words, a school's restructuring committee must examine its school's total situation — strengths, needs and goals. After this crucial "first step," the strategies presented in this document will perhaps provide food for thought to stimulate brainstorming ideas for restructuring.

It is important to realize that *many* schools throughout the United States are seeking ways to change. Exchanging ideas about restructuring and networking is one very useful, pragmatic way to avoid "reinventing the wheel" needlessly. It is also important to recognize that "restructuring" usually means that a school utilizes a *wide variety of strategies*, most linked and woven into a new vision of empowering, innovative, holistic approaches to schooling. A restructured school needs to be imagined first, then organized. For that reason, other sources which could serve your school in planning to restructure are listed in Part 3.

Basing this document on real cases

This document is based on lessons learned from actual public schools in California. Research was conducted as part of the Students at Risk Program at Far West Laboratory. Different aspects of this research were published in May 1995, in two volumes. Volume I, "Lessons Learned," presents insights for policy-makers on the struggles, strategies and successes of ten schools — from a systemic reform point of view. Volume II presents short profiles of these ten schools. These profiles are deliberately brief and highlight only key — not all — restructuring strategies and challenges at each school studied.

This document, Volume III of that series, is practitioner-oriented and focused on specific restructuring strategies that can help students who are English Language Learners (ELLs). These students are traditionally identified as Limited-English Speaking (LES) or Limited-English Proficient (LEP) by their teachers, schools and districts. However, as explained, we will deliberately use the term "ELL" throughout this volume. Identifying students as English Language Learners instead of LES/LEP/NES (non-English speaking) is a part of a current *paradigm shift* — a new way of seeing these students as highly capable, not limited, individuals. So, too, *restructuring is about creating a paradigm shift in schooling*. It seems fitting to link new terms with a fresh vision.

Believing in the feasibility of restructuring

It is entirely possible that the concepts in this document may seem like common sense. This is fortunate, since our belief is that everyone should feel that restructuring is doable, sensible and worthwhile. The "feasibility" factor has been included, because one objective of this volume was to explain sources and creative ways for implementing restructuring strategies.

Understanding the context of school reform

It is important to understand the larger context of systemic reform that has been spreading across the United States. While reform is not new to American education, the notion of *systemic* reform is different, because it approaches educational change from a holistic perspective. Essentially, systemic reform is a new vision for changing the *entire system* of schooling. Top-down reforms originating from the federal level, for example, have resulted in major changes in Title I (formerly known as Chapter I). Thus, in schools where more than half the students meet a poverty criteria, Title I funds can now be used for "schoolwide projects," where comprehensive services are meant to benefit *all* students in the entire school.

Researchers (M. Fullan, M. Miles, M. McLaughlin, D. Hopkins and others) have clearly shown that top-down reform by itself does *not* work. *Grassroots commitment is essential to meaningful, long-lasting change.*

Re-thinking the school budget

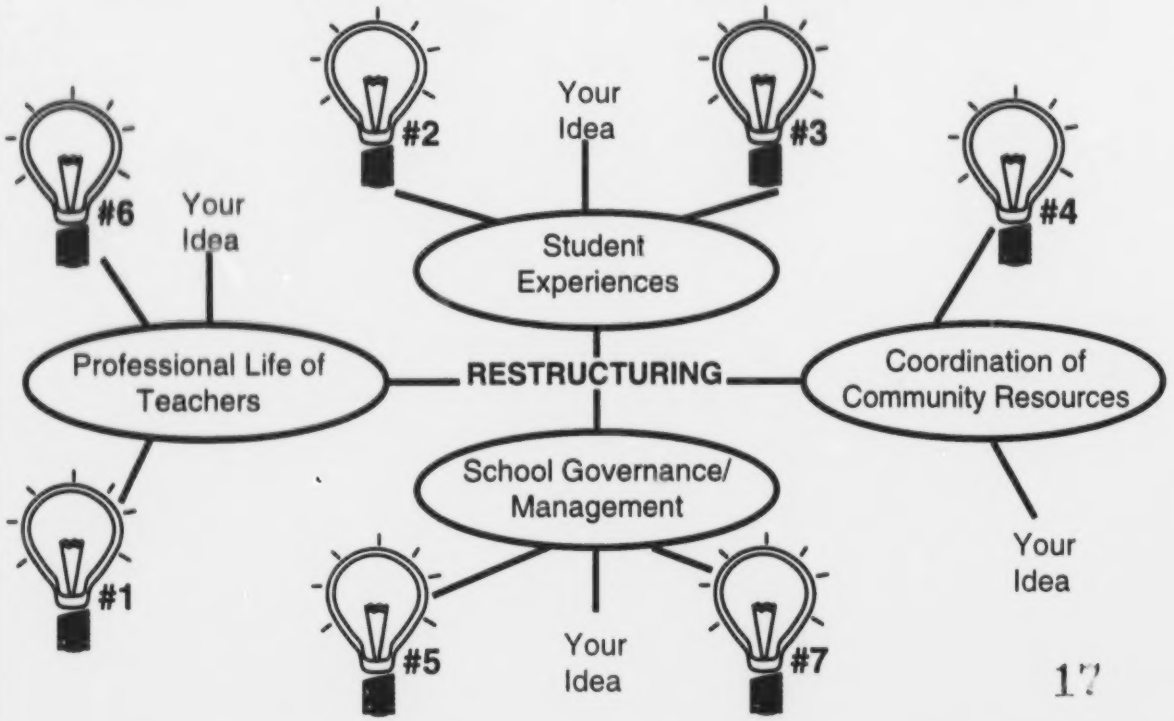
School staff can begin restructuring by taking a close look at how their school money is spent. Sometimes, existing funds can be re-deployed in more appropriate ways, according to the agreed-upon restructuring plan. For example, if it is found that students need enrichment experiences in math and science, it doesn't make sense to keep funding a "drill and practice" kind of computerized Chapter 1 reading lab. Funds might be better spent in developing an in-depth family math and family science program. As with other decisions, reaching consensus on budget issues requires much patience and hard

work. Saying "no" to exciting opportunities because of established priorities and limited funds is never easy.

Applying a conceptual framework to school restructuring

Of the many frameworks on restructuring, one we found particularly useful is the work of the National Center on Organization and Restructuring of Schools (1991). Located in Wisconsin, the Center uses an organizing framework (in the ellipses below) based on four components. You can use this framework, or any other, for brainstorming ideas and prioritizing. For example, we have clustered the seven strategies detailed in this volume around the Center's framework below.

These four components could be ideal starting points for school committees to do "mind mapping" or "webs" as they begin to



brainstorm about their school's restructuring plan. Begin by drawing the four bubbles listed above. As ideas are generated by the site leadership team or entire school, draw lines connecting the ideas to the bubbles or each other. In this way, ideas can be detailed, combined or eliminated.

Interested individuals could also research the findings published by the National Center on Organization and Restructuring of Schools on what works for ELL populations. (Not surprisingly, many of the restructuring ideas described in Wisconsin were found in the ten California schools that we studied.)

Seeking more information about restructuring

This volume is part of a series of reports based on research in restructured schools. Although this document provides short descriptions of the efforts of three actual schools, please refer to Volume II of the series for more complete profiles. Volume II includes the lessons learned and dilemmas encountered during the restructuring process of the ten schools we studied in depth because of their significant ELL populations. Likewise, Part 3 of this volume lists other documents which could provide guidance to a school team or leader for restructuring.

Part 1

An Overview of Restructuring and Seven Ideas to Consider

Part 1 will offer an **overview** and will also focus on **seven specific strategies** which schools with English Language Learners (ELLs) have utilized in restructuring their educational communities. All could apply to elementary, middle and high schools. Each strategy listed will contain the following components:

- a **definition/description** to clarify the concept;
- an **example** to illustrate its practice (taken from our sample of ten schools);
- a list of **benefits** to advocate for that restructuring idea;
- a **rationale** to explain why that restructuring idea is appropriate for ELLs;
- a list of **professional development** topics needed to accomplish the strategy;
- a list of materials and activities to develop the **necessary resources**;
- an elaboration of **support required** by school staff and team leaders to achieve the restructuring goals; and
- a description of potential **challenges** faced by schools with significant numbers of ELLs while applying the restructuring idea.

Overview

What exactly is a restructured school?

Like many buzz words in education, "restructuring" has entered educators' professional vocabulary, but a consistent definition of a restructured school is very slippery. However, *the key issues in restructuring are organizational changes at the school level, and changes in how teachers, students and parents perceive their roles as members of a school community.* ***The ultimate purpose of restructuring is to improve the school for students.***

At its most basic level, a restructured school has chosen to deliberately move away from conventional practice, for three key purposes: 1) for improving student performance, 2) for improving the motivation and commitment of its constituents, and 3) for improving the professional skills of teachers. Essentially, participants in the planning process for constructing a restructured school have chosen to see their school with new lenses, for the educational benefit of students. Seeing things differently necessarily means dropping some old habits and being open to adopting new practices.

Research on professional development, cognitive learning theory and school change suggest that teachers will understand and commit to a new program when they have had a voice in its development and see its benefits for students. Thus, teachers must be involved in restructuring planning from the start and must continue to be involved all along the way, to reflect on and report about the impact of the restructuring efforts on students.

Most importantly, it is critical that everyone understands that the *entire school community is a partner in the educational improvement process.* This means that an ethnically and linguistically diverse group of teachers, parents, paraeducators, administrators and students should be involved in planning the work at every level of restructuring in a school with an ELL population.

Why is professional development so important for restructuring?

Many educators have become accustomed to thinking of special needs populations as "belonging" to a school's teacher specialist, like a Chapter 1/Title 1 reading teacher, an English-as-a-Second-Language teacher or a special education teacher. Therefore, long-range, in-depth professional development sessions are critical to help all teachers believe that the education of this segment of the student population is also their responsibility. In a sense, the goal of professional development within restructuring should be to prepare teachers for

teaching *any and all students* in a school. Consciousness-raising regarding ELL, special education and other special needs students is an important first step in the implementation of school reform. To better serve these students, *all* staff members will need to establish lists of training priorities for themselves, such as SDAIE — specially designed academic instruction in English (also known as "sheltered instruction"), equitable cooperative learning, hands-on math and science, conflict resolution, etc.

Sources for obtaining presenters and/or information on these topics include the county offices of education, local universities, educational non-profit organizations such as Far West Laboratory, federally-funded comprehensive assistance centers and teacher organizations such as California Association for Bilingual Education, California Science Teachers Association, etc. Some sources for assistance in obtaining professional development are listed in Part 3.

What sorts of resources are necessary?

Restructuring is not so much an outcome as it is a process. To realize such an important goal, it is necessary, up-front, to understand that *time spent planning is not time wasted.* Everyone will need to realize that the time it takes for brainstorming, problem-solving and establishing priorities for a restructured school will cost money and copious amounts of energy, patience and commitment. A year to plan a customized restructured school is not only reasonable, but recommended. In schools we visited, weekly meetings of various sub-committees have proven effective in carefully hammering out a workable plan to serve the unique needs of a school's community.

Why should the support of all members of a school community be sought?

Top-down and grassroots support are both absolutely crucial to the effective crafting of a restructured school. School board members, community groups and district administrators need to work cooperatively with school site personnel and parents. At the school site, establishing cohesive teams is a highly effective mechanism for helping teachers to collaborate and develop more integrated and consistent lessons. It takes extraordinary amounts of time and effort to overcome inertia and "business as usual," but the effort is more than worthwhile. By enlisting the cooperation of all members of the school community (parents, paraeducators, *everyone*), a school will not only be restructured, it can be *transformed*. In this way everyone in the restructured school community helps raise empowered and well-educated life-long learners.

How can the parents of ELL students be included in restructuring?

Some schools, including the three described in this document, have experienced extraordinary success in engaging the assistance and long-term involvement of parents of ELLs. Based on their experience, the first step is to believe that parents care and want to help. The next step is to launch *serious and concerted outreach efforts*. Inviting parents to become involved is not enough. What ELL parents often need is personal communication, in their language if possible, and reassurance that their voices will be heard. As parents experience the positive influence they can have, the word will spread to other parents. In this way, the amount and quality of parent involvement will increase. ELL parents can be valuable allies in a school's restructuring effort as long as they feel welcome and believe that their contributions are making a significant difference. Affective factors can never be underestimated. Practical considerations, such as providing childcare, concurrent translation, and even transportation to the school meetings, are also critical for insuring ELL parent support.

Can restructuring *really* happen at my school?

The basic issue facing school reform is the normal, predictable response to change: *anxiety, fear* and *discomfort*. Moreover, in communities with high numbers of special needs students, student transience is often a hard reality, and this factor frequently causes disruptions in class size, grade combinations and groupings. Many barriers can arise, such as lack of room or funds to fully implement the reform vision. In other instances, teachers may not like to collaborate or swap students, but prefer their self-contained classrooms. However, given a commitment to work together and a shared vision of the restructuring effort, these and other barriers have been dealt with successfully in many schools. Three schools which bravely underwent such radical changes are described in Part 3 of this volume.

Will restructuring work for all schools with ELL students?

Essentially, what would succeed for restructuring *any* school could work for schools with ELL students, *as long as their unique needs are considered* as part of the restructuring plan. For example, ELL students can benefit greatly from cooperative learning groups in regular classrooms, rather than spending a great deal of time away in individualized ESL programs. Yet, great care must be taken to ensure that students interact with their English-speaking peers as they become fluent in English. In fact, many schools are moving away from "pull-out" services to "push-in" programs, where the teacher specialists go into the regular classrooms to work with the special needs students. The concept of "push-in" services is itself an important restructuring tool, but many teacher

specialists believe that there are times when a special needs student might need particular, individual attention. Thus, we found some teacher specialists advocate *a balance of push-in and pull-out services*, depending on the school and students' circumstances.

How are ELL students best grouped for instruction?

The main restructuring challenge that schools with ELL populations have to keep in mind is *to enable academic learning while simultaneously helping students learn English*. In our research, schools with student populations with diverse language needs struggled to find an appropriate balance between homogeneous and heterogeneous groupings to ensure that *all* students are included in restructuring efforts but still receive instruction appropriate to their language proficiency levels. Put in other words, the main tension schools typically face is in trying to balance grouping strategies that promote equity in learning the core curriculum (e.g., heterogeneous grouping, mainstreaming) with those designed to be more developmentally and individually appropriate (e.g., homogeneous groupings tailored to the targeted need of students with different language proficiency levels). (Refer to Volume I of this series for further elaboration of this issue.)

This issue is complicated in schools with limited resources (e.g., small numbers of staff with the appropriate language expertise and training in relation to the number and concentration of non-English language groups). Often ELL students are marginalized through placement into a few classrooms or courses with teachers who have the expertise or willingness to teach them. Keeping ELL students in such classrooms all day denies them opportunities for establishing relationships with students of other ethnicities, languages levels, socio-economic backgrounds, etc. T*o strike a balance, many schools use a combination of both heterogeneous and homogeneous grouping* since they recognize the social and emotional benefits of providing *all* students with opportunities to experience diversity.

Parents of "gifted students" who may object to the inclusion of ELLs may need to be convinced of the value of heterogeneous grouping. Educational researchers (E. Cohen, S. Kagan, and others) provide specific suggestions on ways to create successful classrooms with mixed ability groups. Thus all students, regardless of their perceived "ability," can have access to an academically challenging environment.

One key response to objections to re-grouping students in a more equitable manner is for the school to substantiate that: 1) it has developed the very best program for all students; 2) high standards have been established for every single

student; and 3) careful assessment/ accountability measures have been implemented to ensure that no student will "fall through the cracks." Advocates of school change could explain restructuring as a rising high tide that lifts all the boats at the same time.

What are some restructuring options for grouping ELL students?

Even though most schools try to strike a balance between homogeneous and heterogeneous grouping, the number and concentration of non-English language groups will influence your options.

Schools with large populations (over 50%) of mostly one kind of non-English language group can consider restructuring in several formats:

1. ELL students are grouped homogeneously in some sort of English language development program for 50-80% of the day, for core subjects like math, science or language arts, preferably with students of the same language background. The rest of their day is spent with fluent English-speaking peers in less language-intensive subjects, such as PE, art or music. *Great care must be taken to integrate ELL students with students of other ethnicities and socio-economic backgrounds for a portion of their school day when possible.*

2. Students learn core subjects in their native language for a few years through traditional bilingual education models that gradually introduce content area instruction in the English language (transitional or maintenance bilingual education).

3. Every classroom teacher learns how to teach and help students learn English by means of linguistically appropriate instruction through sheltered English (also known as SDAIE — specially designed academic instruction in English) and content-based ESL. *However, a formal English Language Development (ELD) program is still necessary to ensure that instruction matches students changing language needs.*

Schools with multiple language groups, where no single language predominates, can group these students homogeneously for part of the day, where students can receive primary language support and sheltered English through a specially-trained teacher and/or paraeducator. *However, in all cases the regular classroom teacher is ultimately responsible for the instruction of their ELL students.*

What are other key dilemmas in serving ELL or other special needs students?

In ELL settings, an English language development (ELD) and/or bilingual education program can be complicated by highly mobile

or transient students. These students do not receive consistent K-5 educational interventions, as is often the case for migrant, homeless, or foster children.

Another dilemma occurs when language resources are unavailable. ELL students whose native language is uncommon in the United States (such as Punjabi, Mien or Farsi) rarely have the opportunity to participate in a primary language support program, because materials and teachers of those languages are scarce.

Full inclusion of special needs students can pose problems. Without a critical mass of support in the community and among staff, questions may arise about the effectiveness of full inclusion of ELL or special education students. The issue becomes especially acute when classroom teachers have not received specific professional development training to serve these special needs students.

How do you know your changes are working?

To continue the metaphor of *a rising tide lifts all boats*, school staff must ask: "How will the rise be measured? What methods will prove to school staff, parents and the world that the tide is indeed lifting everyone?" Being able to define and measure student success will necessarily mean that the restructured school has set clear goals and expectations about what students should know and be able to do. Once student outcomes are ***accurately and authentically assessed***, that information can then be used for enhancing and improving the restructured school's curriculum and instruction.

How do school changes fit within the larger political and economic context?

Advocates of school reform need to pay close attention to the political and economic consequences of their actions. Consensus about school reform can be very difficult to achieve, and job security may be affected when wholesale changes are implemented. Certificated and classified unions have taken exception to changes that impact their members when they were not consulted. Parents who believe their children are benefiting sufficiently from the present program may not welcome any proposed changes. These factors cannot be overlooked, and careful tapping of local sources of information will help the restructuring school to obtain needed support and avoid problematic issues. *Token efforts at parent inclusion will dilute the restructuring effort and possibly damage it irrevocably.* When parents are made allies in efforts to transform a school into a highly successful source of academic preparation for all students, the political forces will likely support leadership team ideas. *It is therefore paramount that parents be included, consulted and informed all along the way towards restructuring.*

How can others be convinced of the value of restructuring?

In our experience, restructuring schools are more likely to be successful if they have school leaders with the "people skills" necessary to persuade parents, staff and the greater community to join the effort. Learning such skills as a leader is quite possible for anyone, and so sources for professional development are included in Part 3. As a first step, a school restructuring team could begin simply by asking itself: *Does our school have a leadership team that is truly representative of the many types of students who make up our community?* If the answer is no (we need more women, people of color, parents of gifted or special education students, bilingual staff, paraeducators, etc.), then such representatives must be sought. More fundamentally, these representatives must have vital knowledge about students. Their input needs to be validated and their recommendations taken seriously.

This volume is a sampler of ideas, NOT an exhaustive list!

We hope that schools with large populations of diverse English Language Learners will be assisted in their mission of restructuring by implementing any combination of the strategies listed in the next section of this volume. *Please remember that the possibilities are endless, and restructuring ideas are limited only by the imagination, will and drive of the school community.*

Restructuring Strategy 1: Creating a "School-within-a-school"

Establish Mini-schools

Definition/Description

Students in an elementary, middle or high school are separated into large groups under the supervision of a sub-set of teachers. Essentially, the school is divided into smaller schools on the same campus, so that a group of students stays with the same team of teachers for extended periods of time, such as the entire year, or even up to graduation. Every teacher in each team instructs students in a particular subject area, or teaches to a certain skill level of a given subject.

Example

At Sanborn Elementary in Salinas, teachers formed three groups based on mutual interest which eventually became known as mini-schools. Each mini-school organized its curriculum under a theme: international arts and sciences, discovery learning and community exploration.

Benefits

- teachers gain deeper understanding of students' individual strengths and needs
- students become well acquainted with teachers' expectations and styles
- students receive more personalized attention

Rationale for ELLs

- ELLs can be grouped into mini-schools by language development needs
- limited language resources can be concentrated into certain mini-schools
- a mini-school provides ELL students with a familiar structure of an "extended family," composed of peers and school staff

Professional development

- team collaboration, group facilitation and shared decision-making
- mini-school budget allocation and fiscal management
- coordinated curriculum development
- proposal writing
- conflict resolution and consensus-building
- cooperative learning and status treatments (for ensuring equity in student groups)
- ESL (English-as-a-Second-Language) methodology or other professional development topics referring to special needs students for teachers unfamiliar with serving such students

Resources necessary

- materials and staff development for the themes adopted by the mini-schools
- student-free days to develop mini-schools' themes, teams, etc.
- funds for professional development to enhance teachers' new roles

Support

- The school principal and district administrators must be ready to share decision-making authority with school staff, parents and the local community.
- The mini-schools must have true latitude in selecting professional development and influencing a portion of the total school budget.
- School staff members must accept commitment to one of the mini-schools.
- All members of the school community need to understand and be involved in a mini-school theme.

Challenges

Forging a cohesive team of teachers requires a considerable investment of time, effort, trust-building and great flexibility. Many teachers are accustomed to being independent and may not like becoming a member of a team and giving up favorite units or projects. Others may not be comfortable with having students with special needs become part of their responsibility. Just ensuring that the breadth and quality of ELL services are maintained when reorganizing staff or re-grouping students is itself formidable. However, by dividing schools into smaller units, stronger student-teacher relationships could develop and such groupings help teachers monitor individual student progress more intensively.

Your notes/questions

Restructuring Strategy 2: Grouping Students by Language Needs

Provide a well-coordinated bilingual-English language development program

Definition/Description

Students of the same non-English language background or students at the same English language acquisition stage are grouped within classrooms or placed into homogeneous classes according to their English language ability. In some cases, ELLs with extremely limited prior schooling will also require literacy/numeracy instruction (ideally, in their primary language). Teachers who are assigned to teach to a certain skill level of English should have the appropriate professional development, certificate or credential, and/or be proficient in the language of the English Language Learners.

Example

At Glassbrook Elementary School, students are homogeneously grouped for reading and language arts by language background and English proficiency; all other subjects are taught in heterogeneous group settings.

Benefits

- lesson planning time can be reduced and learning time extended because of narrower language needs within each classroom
- English language development (ELD) lessons become more targeted to a specific need
- students acquire new language skills with assistance of peers at a similar level
- language development resources are maximized

Rationale for ELLs

- ELLs need a coherent bilingual/ELD program that moves them through language acquisition stages, in both languages, in a developmentally appropriate manner
- supporting the primary language of ELLs provides connections with the home
- supporting the primary language of ELLs allows parents to help their children with homework and reading
- supporting the primary language of ELLs provides valuable bilingual skills for life

Professional development

- English-as-a-Second-Language (ESL)/(ELD) methodology
- specially designed academic instruction in English (SDAIE, sometimes referred to as "sheltered English"); and any other topic referring to language instruction for ELLs
- cooperative learning and status treatments (for ensuring equity in student groups)
- course work in the primary language, history or culture of their students

- appropriate placement of paraeducators as classroom *assistants*, under the direction of the classroom teacher
- paraeducators should be trained to deliver appropriate instruction

Resources necessary

- appropriate literacy materials in the language to be supported
- staff development for teaching language through content area instruction
- funds for professional development to enhance teachers' and paraeducators' new roles

Support

- Administrators must understand, accept and contribute to the bilingual policy.
- Teachers must be supportive of bilingualism and understand that second language acquisition takes time.
- Teacher's union must assist schools in finding ways to compensate teachers for costs of staff development.
- Political and community leaders must be kept informed of the restructuring efforts and understand the school's goals to promote language proficiency.
- Parents must clearly understand the school's language development goals and make *informed* decisions about their child's education.

Challenges

Primary language instruction and materials are not possible in some languages, and the limited number of speakers of a particular language may preclude the possibility of offering such support. In addition, limited funds can negatively impact a school's ability to serve all its diverse languages. Choosing which language can be supported can be a delicate issue.

Difficulty in providing incentives for teachers to to learn language instruction methodologies could likely reduce teacher participation. Other issues of intergroup tension, such as lack of team cohesion, conflicts in teaching styles, cross-team competitiveness or unclear roles can weaken the effort, particularly in balancing the responsibilities of teachers and paraeducators.

Authentic, meaningful assessment of student achievement will need to be developed. Locating or creating authentic assessment in the languages of ELL students, though worthwhile, is laborious.

Your notes/questions

Restructuring Strategy 3: Rewriting/Integrating the School's Curriculum

Develop and implement curriculum integration and enrichment

Definition/Description

A school's curriculum is upgraded, enriched and linked by teachers who develop thematic units and/or projects that integrate subject matter and curriculum around core themes. In many cases, this new curriculum is aligned with state frameworks or standards. A resource center for the units and the materials could be established through the help of the librarian or even a school volunteer.

Example

At Almeria Middle School, core subjects are combined and integrated. Throughout the school, Integrated/ Thematic Instruction (ITI) is used, including writing across the curriculum and in-class historical/geographical simulations and models.

Benefits

- students learn concepts rather than simply memorizing facts
- students utilize reading and writing for learning and expressing, rather than just completing simple exercises from a textbook
- the curriculum produced is usually more challenging and interesting for both students and teachers
- units can be shared among teachers who may themselves contribute to the resources

Rationale for ELLs

- the language used in integrated lessons tends to be more contextualized, making it easier for ELLs to comprehend and participate
- greater amount of time spent on a theme or unit allows ELLs to grasp the concepts and internalize the new vocabulary

Professional development

- theme selection and coordinated curriculum development through ITI (integrated/thematic instruction) and authentic assessment
- team collaboration and group facilitation
- conflict resolution and consensus-building
- cooperative learning and status treatments (for ensuring equity in student groups)
- proposal writing for staff
- process writing for students

Resources necessary

- materials and staff development for creating novel curriculum
- student-free days to develop curriculum
- continuous refinement of the curriculum by teachers and students

Support

- A set of teachers must voluntarily commit to develop curriculum that will be shared.
- Administrators can support innovation and risk-taking by encouraging and commending teachers for their efforts to revamp the curriculum and design original units.
- Political and community leaders must be kept informed of the restructuring efforts, and understand the school's goals to promote interdisciplinary thematic instruction.
- Parents must clearly understand the academic goals of the school's program.

Challenges

From the outset, all staff must understand that developing curriculum for ITI is time-intensive and continuous. Accordingly, adequate time to plan and reflect must be worked into the school schedule. Sometimes it may be difficult to reconcile district and school staff development needs given that most schools have limited student-free days.

Aligning thematic instruction with the state curricular goals can be difficult, especially in multi-age settings. Staff or parents may fear losing some core curriculum (e.g., math) through curricular integration. Moreover, intra-team dynamics can cause uneven implementation of the new program. Finally, evaluating the new curriculum will require the development of meaningful assessment instruments or processes.

Making sure that ELLs have access further complicates a school's ability to produce new curriculum. In some cases, a school will need to produce integrated curriculum in the students' primary language, increasing the time and cost of development. In others, a school will need to create "sheltered English" integrated thematic units.

Your notes/questions

Restructuring Strategy 4: Teaching Students about their Community

Develop and implement a student/ community-based curriculum

Definition/Description

Schools incorporate content matter that refers to the interests, concerns and issues of their students and the community, while at the same time learning how to adapt instruction to be more like what students are familiar with at home. Creating student-centered meaningful curriculum is inclusive for ELLs since it places a high value on the life experiences of students' families and the local community.

Example

The Community Mini-school at Sanborn Elementary is creating lessons that focus on careers and cultures within the local area while promoting technology, video and athletics through after-school sports right on the school grounds.

Benefits

- teachers' and students' work is centered on closer linkages between home and school
- teachers' awareness of their students' backgrounds, strengths and needs is enhanced
- parents and community volunteers are more likely to become involved in school events

Rationale for ELLs

- the vocabulary used in lessons based on a student's community is more likely to be familiar to ELLs
- creating lessons on the issues of the community fosters ELL parents' and students' empowerment, avoiding marginalization
- developing curriculum based on the local community makes school a more relevant place especially for older ELL students who may think school is not for them

Professional development

- intensive research, outreach and coordination with the parents of the community
- cultural discontinuity, multiculturalism and pluralistic education
- information on careers and local business resources
- service learning projects
- TRIBES, or other community-building professional development

- some staff might benefit from taking course work in the primary language, history or culture of their students

Resources necessary

- release time for teachers to collaborate, fine-tune and reflect on what the community is and how it can be linked to the school curriculum
- materials and staff development for creating novel curriculum
- student-free days to write the new curriculum

Support

- Community support/information/on-going participation is essential.
- Teachers need time to plan units of instruction which integrate students' lives, families and community.
- Collaboration within and outside the school is necessary.
- Political and community leaders must be kept informed of the restructuring efforts, and understand the school's goals to promote community and school linkages.
- Parents must clearly understand the academic goals of the school's program and their pivotal role in connecting school and life.

Challenges

Developing a coherent, student-centered curriculum is labor-intensive and consensus is difficult to achieve. Even the decision of what elements of the community to include in the curriculum can be problematic. Most ELL parents are unaccustomed to being asked to participate in the formal education of their children. Some immigrant parents may resist the idea of educating their children about their native culture.

Aligning community-centered instruction with the state curricular goals can be difficult. Staff could be overloaded with innovations and would need time to focus and internalize the new curriculum, and share ideas. Also, staff or parents may fear losing some core curriculum (e.g., math) because of the curricular changes. Ultimately, evaluating the new curriculum will require the development of meaningful assessment instruments or processes.

Your notes/questions

Restructuring Strategy 5: Re-arranging How Time is Used

Alter the schedule to be more flexible and responsive to students' and teachers' needs

Definition/Description

In addition to a year-round schedule, block and staggered scheduling of class periods can be used to reorganize time in schools, allowing for extended periods of instructional time to teach thematic units and integrated curriculum. Block scheduling refers to longer periods of uninterrupted instructional time. Staggered schedules are schedules that allow fewer (usually half) of a regular classroom's students to be present for certain subjects and periods of the day.

Example

At Glassbrook, the daily routine and bell schedule were changed to accommodate an uninterrupted, two-hour block of classroom time before lunch. In addition, staggered reading four days a week is used to reduce the number of students in each classroom. During the first hour of each morning, before native English speakers arrive, Spanish speakers are offered literacy in their native language, while sheltered English reading is provided for other ELL groups. In the afternoon, for the last hour of the day, reading is taught to the native English speakers after the ELLs leave.

Benefits

- year-round schooling diminishes the likelihood of students forgetting critical information over the summer
- longer blocks of class time permit more in-depth lessons and provide increased time on task

Rationale for ELLs

- staggered scheduling results in fewer students for language arts/reading instruction, allowing more individualized attention and special literacy attention for ELLs
- year-round schooling is especially important in communities where there are not enough speakers of English at home for students to interact with during the long summer vacation
- longer blocks of class time would allow teachers to interact with ELLs on a more individual basis and assess their language needs more authentically

Professional development

- **[See Idea #2 for professional development referring to grouping students by language needs]**
- master schedule coordinators may need staff development on language acquisition stages to create a daily and yearly schedule that meets ELL needs

Resources necessary

- time and funds for teachers to coordinate new schedules, reorganize instructional time and collaborate
- at least a year for staff to plan a major time change (such as a year-round school)

Support

- The entire staff and school community, as well as the district administration, will need to agree to the new schedules.
- The unions must review and agree to the time changes which affect their members.
- Parents will need to be informed well in advance of schedule changes in case their family is affected.

Challenges

Achieving consensus on schedule changes can be difficult, particularly for establishing a year-round school. Placing teachers and students on different cycles/tracks is very problematic, especially when trying to put siblings on the same schedule. Inflexibility regarding summer vacation as well as start and end times of the school day can impede efforts to create a schedule which would really benefit students academically.

A year-round schedule can be especially beneficial for ELLs because there is no summer-long gap in their education. However, such a program would not necessarily benefit migrant students (many of whom are ELLs) since they often do not live in the same community for the entire year.

Staggered schedules may provide opportunities for students to receive more individualized instruction, but those students dismissed early may not have someone waiting at home. Thus, a school may need to provide a latchkey program so these students do not disrupt the instruction of the late-comers. Similarly, students on the second staggered-day schedule may arrive too early and disrupt the school schedule.

Your notes/questions

Restructuring Strategy 6: Teaching in Ad Hoc Teams

Form teacher teams by their strengths or interests and design a new curriculum

Definition/Description

Teachers form cohesive groups which are organized around a unit they would like to build together. Unlike an artificial departmental structure which divides a school into a sequential series of classes meant to promote specialized knowledge, new curriculum teams should be ad hoc and cross-disciplinary. For example, if a teacher would like to promote conservation, he or she could gather with a few other teachers to plan a series of texts, videos and field trips to help students learn about the conversion of matter to energy or the depletion of natural resources; help students develop a school recycling program through the calculation of costs and expenditures; promote research projects to help the community support conservation with a modest scholarship as a prize, etc.

Example

At Carr Intermediate School, interdisciplinary teams had a common planning period and teach multi-grade, heterogeneously grouped students. Carr's staff found that this strategy involved a five-year process with three stages. In Stage I, teams need leadership support on how to meet and work together, develop group procedures and begin using a "writing across the curriculum" approach. By Stage 2, the teams' structures are well established, thematic units are written, content area separation begins to dissolve and the writing process increases. In Stage 3, teams continue to refine their work, sharing among teams occurs, teachers focus on self-evaluation and assessment.

Benefits

- students are usually asked by their teachers to perform more complex academic tasks than those suggested in textbooks
- the curriculum produced is usually more challenging and interesting for both students and teachers
- teachers exchange professional development knowledge and become each other's coaches

Rationale for ELLs

- teachers in teams tend to network more and exchange information about individual ELL students' academic/linguistic needs and progress
- professional development in ESL/ELD is more likely to be reinforced when peers interact more and share ideas
- teachers in teams can suggest and share books and materials for ESL/ELD or bilingual instruction, thus maximizing limited resources

Professional development

- team collaboration, group facilitation and shared decision-making
- coordinated curriculum development
- proposal writing
- conflict resolution and consensus-building
- cooperative learning and status treatments (for ensuring equity in student groups)
- English-as-a-Second-Language methodology or other professional development topics referring to special needs students for teachers unfamiliar with serving such students

Resources necessary

- materials and staff development for new curriculum
- student-free days to develop and plan how to implement the new curriculum
- long-term planning (at Carr, restructuring took approximately five years)
- funds for professional development to enhance teachers' new roles
- continuous refinement of the curriculum by teachers and students

Support

- Outside sources of funding, in the form of grants, are often crucial for funding to produce original curriculum with peer support.
- Administrators need to manipulate the master schedule to permit more options for staff.
- Solutions must be found to provide release time for staff to work together, team or coach one another.

Challenges

Ad hoc teaming occurs only in schools where risk-taking is encouraged. Creating such an environment requires sensitive leadership and district support, but unfortunately sufficient time and money for effective teaming is often in short supply. Incorporating new staff members into already-established teams can take time and/or re-configurations.

If ELLs are grouped heterogeneously across the school, they will most likely be at different levels of English language acquisition which would complicate ad hoc teaming. Often the unique needs of ELLs are overlooked in voluntary efforts to create new curriculum.

Your notes/questions

Restructuring Strategy 7: Fortifying Grade Level Teacher Teams

Establish solid grade-level teacher teams

Definition/Description

In an elementary school, a grade-level team of teachers meets, develops and agrees to implement a curriculum to be taught during the year. At the secondary division level, a team of teachers from different disciplines, which are generally taught to the same grade group, cooperate to teach a series of units that incorporate instructional features from each of their disciplines. To promote collegiality and ease the work, a release time is sometimes provided to permit teachers to write lesson plans together, observe each others' classrooms or team teach.

Example

With block scheduling, Fern Bacon Middle School organizes staff and students into grade-level houses that provide students with project-oriented learning. Common preparation periods and weekly planning periods facilitate team building, integrated thematic units and projects, and better communication.

Benefits

- teachers exchange professional development knowledge and become each other's coaches
- curriculum produced is usually more developmentally appropriate to students' needs
- units can be shared among teachers who may add to the resources

Rationale for ELLs

- teachers in teams tend to network more and exchange information about individual ELL students' academic/linguistic needs and progress
- professional development in ESL/ELD is more likely to be reinforced when peers interact more and share ideas
- teachers in teams can suggest and share books and materials for ESL/ELD or bilingual instruction, thus maximizing limited resources

Professional development

- team collaboration, group facilitation and shared decision-making
- coordinated curriculum development
- conflict resolution and consensus-building
- cooperative learning and status treatments (for ensuring equity in student groups)

Resources necessary

- mutual on-going support, constructive feedback and collaboration
- options for teachers to select topics for professional development activities
- a needs assessment to determine staff development priorities
- time for meeting and planning
- access to rich materials, ideas for curriculum development
- common prep periods for planning, collaborating together

Support

- District and/or school-site funds are needed to provide "release time" for grade-level meetings during the school day.
- "Banking" time (for example, extending four school days several minutes longer) is one way to make weekly grade-level team meetings possible.
- Paraeducators might be included in grade-level meetings.

Challenges

Teachers are rarely prepared by pre-service or teacher credential programs to plan and deliver curriculum with peers. Accordingly, teacher participation in teaming and joint planning can be uneven across grade-level teams and with other grade levels as well. Personality conflicts or inter-group dynamics may also hinder cooperation. Thus, time and opportunities to develop trust and rapport are essential.

In some cases, teachers of the same grade level may decide to exchange a portion of their students for a unit of study or a period of time, but this is not easy when students are ELLs, particularly if the students are from different language groups. Unless the curriculum developed by grade-level teams has the adaptations necessary to deliver it to students not yet proficient in English, teachers with primary responsibility for ELLs will not find grade-level teams useful. Moreover, simply exchanging students between classrooms does not provide equity. Special training or coaching from peers is needed for teachers to understand how to adjust their instruction to serve the needs of diverse students.

Your notes/questions

Closing thoughts . . .

The foregoing seven strategies (and, indeed, all restructuring efforts) have one thing in common: a new perception of "disadvantaged students" as active, capable learners. By building on the knowledge, skills and abilities that students bring with them, schools can complement rather than contradict the students' experiences. *Essentially, the entire restructuring effort depends on* ***everyone*** *at a school embracing change for the benefit of all students.*

Part 2

Challenges and Dilemmas Faced by Three Schools Undertaking Restructuring in Diverse Language Communities

Part 2 presents three examples of actual schools with diverse language populations which have engaged in a spectrum of restructuring strategies. These "vignettes" demonstrate the complexity of restructuring. Also, these actual school examples illustrate the overlapping nature of reform strategies and new challenges that result. These three vignettes and the open-ended questions can be a catalyst for school communities for dialogue or discussion about which restructuring strategies may be appropriate.

Background Information: School Reform for ELLs

Systemic reform

With the support of the U.S. Department of Education and private foundations, the Stanford Working Group on Federal Education Programs for Limited-English Proficient Students has produced a series of documents on LEP students and systemic reform. In one paper entitled "For All Students," D. August, K. Hakuta, and D. Pompa wrote on page 5:

"Programs for L.E.P students must be designed and administered quite differently than they currently are. Reorienting American schools away from the old assumptions — that minority children can learn only basic skills and that bilingualism is a handicap to be overcome — will require a comprehensive approach. Reform must be systemic in nature. That is, it must embody 'unifying vision .... a coherent direction and strategy for educational reform throughout the system.' Such reform will require conscious planning, coordination, and leadership in all instructional components, including curriculum, professional development, assessment, and accountability. "

The researchers further caution that thus far "the reform movement has generally sidestepped the particular conditions, needs, and strengths of L.E.P children. Difficult issues remain to be addressed in many areas including, curriculum, instruction, assessment, and leadership. Unless these and other issues are addressed directly, well-intentioned reforms could jeopardize a generation of progress for L.E.P students."

Precisely because restructuring can be problematic, especially in ELL settings, we have provided three actual school stories in this section to stimulate discussion among members of a school restructuring team. By reviewing the three scenarios, readers may identify with these schools' experiences and possibly see some parallels in their own schools.

Legal requirements

It is important to remember that in any school restructuring, the rights of ELLs must be assured. In "For All Students," the authors explain on page 2:

"The general recognition that the system must be for all students is backed by civil rights laws that govern the administration of all Federal aid to educational institutions. Title VI of the Civil Rights Act of 1964 bars discrimination on the basis of race, color, and national origin. The U.S. Department of Education interprets the Act and its implementing regulations to require that school districts address the language-related needs of limited-English-proficient students; this interpretation has been upheld by

the U.S. Supreme Court in *Lau v. Nichols*, 414 U.S. 563 (1974). Section 1703(f) of the *Equal Educational Opportunity Act* (EEOA) of 1975 also lays out the responsibilities of school districts toward the education of L.E.P. students. The EEOA provides that failure to take appropriate steps to educate L.E.P. students constitutes a violation of equal educational opportunity." In addition, another federal case, *Pyler v. Doe*, established that all students must be accepted into U.S. schools regardless of citizenship status. Thus ELLs are guaranteed the right to an equitable and worthwhile education in American schools regardless of their immigrant status or language need

Thus, when envisioning your restructured school, the central question is: *Will this program ensure that our ELL (L.E.P) students have the same high academic opportunities as our fluent English speaking students?* Another way to pose this question simply is to ask yourself: *Would I want my own child enrolled in this program?*

Three schools restructuring in diverse language communities

Each of the following three school examples is meant to be read by each team member responsible for planning restructuring. After reading, each story can be a focal point for reflection by using the question which follows the case description. There are no right answers.

Instead, you may add any other questions which would be pertinent to your school.

To begin a discussion using these actual school examples, try the following:

1. **READ**
2. **REFLECT**
3. **APPLY/COMPARE TO YOUR SITUATION**

For more information about these or any of the ten schools used in this research, please refer to Volume II of this series, which contains the names and phone numbers of the appropriate contact person from each school.

Restructuring School #1: Sanborn Elementary

School Context:

Enrollment: 758, in grades K-5
Location: Rural
Ethnicity: 96% Hispanic, 2% White, .7% Filipino, .7% Asian, .4% American Indian
ELLs: 580 students (76.5%)
Major langugage groups: Spanish (577 students); 3 other languages
AFDC/Free Lunch: 30%/90%

School-community context/ELL issues

Sanborn Elementary School in Salinas, California has a tremendous challenge: ensuring that its students become academic achievers while simultaneously acquiring English-as-a-Second-Language. In a predominantly Spanish-speaking community, over 90% of Sanborn students are identified as Limited-English Proficient (LEP). Most students are immigrants themselves or children of immigrants who had left rural Mexico in search of a better life for their children. Most of the parents of Sanborn students are farmworkers or are employed in low-paying manual labor. Persistent gentrification of housing in the local neighborhoods and a history of unresponsive local politics had produced a lack of services for poor families. The high impact of generational poverty, inadequate health care or counseling, absent alternatives to substance abuse, high drop-out rates and a lack of employment opportunities have resulted in high incidences of violence and crime in the neighborhood. Conditions in the Sanborn community had so deteriorated that school staff had begun to teach children to "duck and cover" to avoid being shot during the occasional gun battles among rival neighborhood gangs.

Language education context

Sanborn staff realize the high stakes in serving their community's children. Having few fluent speakers of English in or around school, coupled with a general need for literacy among many of the children's families, makes the Sanborn staff aware of the critical role the school must play in educating their students. Thus, about a decade ago, the school instituted a highly structured language education program that allows children to progress academically in their native language while transitioning into English-only instruction. The incorporation of this model, formally known as "late-exit transitional bilingual education," was one of the many restructuring efforts the school implemented, requiring most teachers to pursue extensive professional development. Sanborn staff consider this restructuring activity a critical step in creating a positive academic program. In fact, the Alisal School District eventually mandated the dual language development approach, which had been pioneered at Sanborn, for all its elementary schools.

To incorporate the dual language education model, Sanborn teachers had to become bilingual or learn methodology to teach their students English through content area instruction. Accordingly, most staff sought certification to ensure that students were receiving instruction designed to move students into the next level of English acquisition. By design, each Sanborn student is placed into a classroom that corresponds to his or her language needs: Spanish transitional, post-transitional and English-only. Classrooms are

sequenced within each grade level to allow children to acquire English in a developmentally appropriate manner. Through this carefully orchestrated schedule, students have more access to learning, regardless of their English fluency level and despite the high transience of their families due to seasonal agricultural work.

School restructuring solution

The bilingual education program served students well for many years, although academic scores were still not as high as the school hoped. A few years ago school staff undertook several more formal initiatives to "restructure" Sanborn into an even stronger academic school. The staff had applied for and received a state restructuring grant to revise the curriculum and instruction by reorganizing the staff into teams called "mini-schools" and by creating multi-age classrooms. Each mini-school was established around a theme, which staff utilize for co-planning curriculum:

- *discovery learning*: student-centered curriculum, focused on science
- *international school of arts and science*: multicultural curriculum, through a study of literature, history and performance arts
- *community exploration*: curriculum centered on citizenship, by studying the local social history and offering community-building events, such as team sports

Added complications and challenges that arose

A major goal of the restructuring concept was to maintain the students in the same mini-school for their entire kindergarten through fifth grade career at Sanborn. However, since students do not progress in English language acquisition at the same rate, and since classrooms are established each year primarily by the language needs, it became impossible for students to retain assignment to their original mini-school each year. There are simply not enough teachers for each mini-school to provide the range of language acquisition stages in each mini-school without too large a range of grade levels per classroom. Additionally, compromises with the master schedule to provide a well-coordinated language development program have occasionally required that teachers transfer between mini-schools to staff a needed classroom.

Understandably, some Sanborn teachers are frustrated that their mini-schools are not truly independent to make decisions about student placement. One staff member explained, "We were all excited with the idea of creating unique thematic curriculum with our mini-school peers, but the reality is that the dual language program

makes scheduling and planning for the next year difficult." Others have argued that maintaining a well-sequenced language development program should take precedence over attempts to stabilize teacher teams because of the high proportion of ELLs. Moreover, many staff felt that administering their own mini-school had added many extra responsibilities which take away from their time to develop curriculum. As one teacher put it, "I would like more interaction and planning time for devising curriculum rather than spending it on the many little bureaucratic issues we must resolve during mini-school meetings."

A question for the reader:

How would you resolve the conflict between a sequenced English language development program and a true mini-school concept?

- place students in classrooms according to academic development levels rather than grade levels: expand the range of multi-grade classrooms
- accept that the desire to keep children within a mini-school for their entire K-5 career is not possible because language development needs take precedence
- use a combination of a staggered schedule and full-time paraeducators in all classrooms in order to divide students into three or more developmentally appropriate groups (one group with the teacher, another with the paraeducator, one works independently; all groups rotate periodically)
- your idea:

Restructuring School #2: Carr Intermediate

School Context:

Enrollment: 1,790, in grades 6–8
Location: Suburban
Ethnicity: 92% Hispanic, 1% White, 1.2% Black, .6% Filipino, 4.6% Asian, .4% Pacific Islander
ELLs: 1,236 students (69%)
Major langugage groups: Spanish (1,191 students); Hmong (9 students); Vietnamese (22 students); 14 students in other languages
AFDC/Free Lunch: 12%/67%

School-community context/ELL issues

Carr Intermediate School is a large, older school in a lower-middle class, largely Latino community in Santa Ana, California. Gang violence, urban poverty, high student transiency and overcrowded classrooms motivated the administration and staff to embark on a series of major restructuring efforts. Carr had been saddled with a bad reputation as a "dumping ground," but in an earlier, more middle-class era, it had been named after Gerald P. Carr, an early astronaut who had graduated from Santa Ana schools. At one time, Carr Intermediate had been an "average junior high." Over time, the neighborhood changed, staff morale declined and many poor, largely immigrant students entered. The principal and several key teachers decided to begin restructuring and radically transform Carr.

Language education context

A district-wide English Language Development (ELD) program had been in place in Santa Ana for over fifteen years, but there had also been a dramatic rise in the numbers of ELL students. By 1990, the majority of students in the district were English Language Learners, many of whom were recently-arrived immigrants. The district's Registration and Testing Center processed approximately 4000 new students each year, most Spanish-dominant.

The district had for years implemented a transitional bilingual education program in the elementary schools, but the middle and high schools relied on instructional assistants and the ELD program, with some bilingual courses. Some of Carr's teachers used sheltered instructional strategies, but the staff included few bilingual teachers. Thus, ELL students entering Carr from feeder elementary schools were more likely to find "sheltered" rather than bilingual instruction.

Because of the large numbers of immigrant students, the district had established newcomer classes at several larger schools. The secondary division called these classes "EASE" (English Acquisition in Secondary Education), with the primary focus being survival English and helping immigrant students adjust to their new school situations. Carr was one of the intermediate schools with an on-site EASE program, and the school also benefited from a recently-awarded Title VII transitional bilingual education grant, CLAVES (Computer Literacy Via Educational Strategies).

School restructuring solution

Carr's restructuring team (known as the "site vision team") decided to address their entire school program, coordinate funding and restructure their school. Funds from a local grant (Santa Ana 2000), Chapter I, SIP, SB65 (Dropout Prevention), Title VII and SB1274 were all used

to develop a schoolwide, coherent, integrated restructuring plan. This plan featured interdisciplinary teaming and intensive staff development.

"Selling" the changes to the staff was accomplished little by little, starting with a pilot program of volunteer teachers, both veterans and novices, all committed to working extra hours and putting in extra effort to accomplish the goal of a "new Carr." Over a five-year period, parents were more connected with the school, and intensive professional development efforts were starting to bear fruit in Carr's classrooms. The lead restructuring team's belief was that the key to bringing about sustained changes was the on-going, in-house staff development program which they had established. Members of the site vision team were candid in stating that what made the program possible were the grants and outside funding sources that Carr had worked so hard to obtain.

Added complications and challenges that arose

Essentially, a few deeply committed individuals, intense networking and substantial extra funding were crucial elements in Carr's restructuring. Then, several events altered the positive chemistry: Carr was required to implement a year-round school schedule with four cycles because district decision-makers believed that a major influx of new students would require a year-round schedule. Thus, the careful placement of ELL students in developmentally appropriate classes was disrupted by the policy to place students on four year-round cycles.

Many of Carr's teachers felt that prior to going year-round, they had had their best year ever in teaching, largely because of their interdisciplinary teaming. With the imposition of the year-round schedule, meeting students' needs was made far more problematic by the dispersal of students across all cycles, with little regard for their English language levels. "Year-round schooling has put a stop to appropriate language placement," lamented one teacher.

Also, changes in staffing meant that some key people left, including the Title VII resource teacher. Another teacher said that if the principal were to leave and a person with a different personal agenda were to step in, Carr's progress would be brought to a screeching halt. Thus, at Carr, the restructuring momentum was significantly side-tracked by the imposition of a year-round schedule, though various personnel changes also had an impact.

Carr's restructuring story reveals that schools are very fragile, dynamic social settings and many unpredictable, outside problems do arise. These dilemmas need to be addressed to keep restructuring plans on course.

A question for the reader:

How would you resolve the dilemma of implementing a multi-cycle, year-round schedule, while also providing quality education for students with widely varying levels of English language skills?

- galvanize parents and the community to postpone a year-round schedule for one year to allow staff to adequately prepare and place students appropriately
- assign all ELLs to cycles according to their English language skills (speaking, reading and writing)
- hire more paraeducators who can speak the languages of the students and assign them to classrooms with the greatest needs
- your idea:

Restructuring School #3: Glassbrook Elementary

School Context:

Enrollment: 436, in grades K-3
Location: Urban, Northern California
Ethnicity: 50% Hispanic, 19% White, 19% Black, 5% Filipino, 4% Asian, 3% Pacific Islander
ELLs: 217 students (50%)
Major langugage groups: Spanish 145 students); Vietnamese (8 students); 41 students in other languages, mostly Farsi
AFDC/Free Lunch: 44%/92%

School-community context/ELL issues

Glassbrook Elementary finds itself in an impoverished, high-crime community, yet "respect" is the operative word at the school. School staff and students work hard to create a safe haven and community of learners for the over four hundred K-3 students who participate in their mutually-created restructured educational environment. A focus on teaching children the social skills for getting along with others led to the development of a school-wide code of conduct: Be Safe, Kind, Productive and Courageous.

The students are culturally diverse, highly transient, and many are children of immigrants from Iran, Mexico, Central America, the Philippines, India, Pakistan, Afghanistan, Vietnam and China. Over 49% of the students are ELLs and use Spanish, Farsi and other languages in their homes. Most receive AFDC and free lunch. A large number of Glassbrook's students leave the community before the end of the school year.

Glassbrook became a Chapter I "schoolwide project," causing staff members to rejoice when they were given the opportunity to combine funds for delivering integrated services. The philosophy of the school, as articulated by the principal, is, "We all believe all children should learn, be served in the classroom and feel successful." Essentially, the vision is one of inclusion — not marginalization, or labeling of students. According to the principal, "No one is a Chapter I student; everyone is a student who is here to learn."

Parents have been brought into the classroom and participate meaningfully in the education of their children, by directly working with students under the guidance of teachers. A strong parent education component has featured evening training sessions for parents, by language groups and interests, with interpreters provided.

Language education context

At Glassbrook, collaboration is evident everywhere, as teachers work together and exhibit a high degree of professionalism that is supported by a school climate that encourages them to try innovative approaches with their students. There is a constant flow of ideas and inquiries about what works, and what could be done to improve teaching and learning.

A multicultural, literature-based, meaningful curriculum has been developed and implemented. All children are seen as being at different developmental stages, but having equal potential and ability to learn. Heterogeneous grouping, native language literacy and bilingual instruction is offered whenever possible. Special education students in the Resource Specialist Program are

integrated in every classroom activity. The enriched curriculum is provided for everyone, and Chapter I services are provided through "push-in" of specialists who provide services within the regular classroom in an effort to reduce teacher-pupil ratios. Each grade has two bilingual classes (English-Spanish) and one English Language Development (sheltered) classroom for all other language groups. A Farsi-speaking paraprofessional provides Farsi reading and language arts before and after school, and Spanish-speaking ELL students are urged to attend bilingual classrooms.

School restructuring solution

Glassbrook's bilingual education and school restructuring solutions are integrated and woven into one program of ensuring equal access to an enriched curriculum. The staff uses a combination of homogeneous grouping for reading and language arts (by language background and English proficiency) and heterogeneous grouping for all other subjects. All teachers meet in grade-level teams to develop curriculum, and a staggered schedule allows half of each classroom's students to be present for the reading and language arts periods of the day.

The schedule allows for an uninterrupted time block so that children and students can engage in lengthier, more in-depth educational experiences. Children as authors is evident in every classroom, and the multicultural focus permeates the entire curriculum. "Mind mapping" is used extensively to help children acquire new knowledge about a topic, and Venn diagramming helps them to compare/contrast different cultures.

Above all, the culture of experimentation has led to extensive professional development opportunities for the staff, who have been trained in the theory of multiple intelligences, TRIBES, AIMS, portfolio and authentic assessment, and other current educational innovations.

The enriched curriculum, combined with altered schedules and effective teaming, all resulted in children making connections between their school work and their own lives. A feeling of "purpose for reading," and a building of understanding about different cultures, their history, their artistic and musical expressions, have all helped students to develop respect for each other. Thus, a sense of community has been built upon a solid base of academic skills, because, as one teacher said, "Kids need academic skills to have good self-esteem."

Students also participate in after-school activities that build both self-esteem and academics: reading clubs, the Drama Club, the Peacemakers Club and the Circle of Leaders.

Added complications and challenges that arose

Although the staggered day schedule has allowed Spanish-speakers to use their native language literacy to transition to reading and writing skills in English, the same option could not be offered to other language groups. Although a Farsi-speaking paraprofessional has begun offering native language development for children of that language group outside of regular classroom time, materials are scarce and the program cannot be fully developed without more Farsi-speaking staff. Despite believing in the value and educational merit of literacy instruction in the native language of students, the school has not been able to offer such assistance to all their ELLs, such as Vietnamese-speaking students. For Glassbrook staff, the failure to incorporate the literature, language and history of all their student groups has been a worrisome reality.

A question for the reader

How would you try to offer literacy support for the few students whose language none of the staff speaks or for which few educational materials are available?

- find a funding source (perhaps an educational materials publisher) to support the local development of primary language materials and books
- recruit and possibly pay parents and other adults from community-based organizations to provide primary language assistance in the "pocket" languages — those languages with few speakers or scarce materials
- have older, bi-literate students produce materials, such as original stories and folktales, and provide cross-age tutoring in the "pocket" languages
- your idea:

Part 3

Other Restructuring Options and Resources

Part 3 provides a brief description of other restructuring options not included in Part 1. Some of these additional ideas were found in the ten school sample of Volumes I and II of this series, and they illustrate what can be done in schools with large proportions of special needs students.

The strategies are organized under the conceptual framework of the Wisconsin National Center on Organization and Restructuring of Schools, mentioned earlier in this volume:

- Student Experiences
- Professional Life of Teachers
- Leadership, Management and Governance
- Coordination of Community Services

Please note: **The following list of "other" restructuring strategies is only a partial listing of possibilities!**

This section also includes a selected list of documents that can help a school learn about or plan restructuring in a diverse language community. Finally, to facilitate work in restructuring at a local level, this volume concludes with names and addresses of a few "technical assistance providers" (non-profit educational organizations) and school networks that can directly assist a school with ELLs to plan and implement their own restructuring efforts.

Restructuring Student Experiences:

Create positive school experiences that address the whole child

92

Definition/description

Multiple interventions to meet the affective, social and emotional needs of the child's complete development are effective. Students are identified early-on as needing one-on-one support, through play-type activities and extra attention. The school environment is transformed to promote "resiliency" in the face of adversity by creating a safe place for the students to experience belonging, high expectations and caring.

Some options

- Provide intensive summer courses for 8th-grade students identified as at-risk, emphasizing goal setting, positive risk-taking and confidence-building, with participation in outdoor physical teamwork and computer courses. Upon completion, graduating 8th graders make a metaphoric and literal transition, "crossing over" to be greeted by administrators of their new high schools.

- Develop a program whereby middle school students visit college campuses, hear about college life and are exposed to the college environment as an attainable goal.

- Establish after-school activities that promote self-esteem and academic achievement.

- Create clubs that focus on student responsibility and self-esteem (such as the Peacemakers Club, Circle of Leaders and Drama Club).

- Institute a TRIBES program, that facilitates conflict resolution and students solving problems with each other and with their teachers. TRIBES is a structured process for fostering open and respectful communications.

- Implement a "Grandparents at School" program with trained senior citizens who volunteer to work with individual or small student groups for reading or discussion.

- Create teaching modules that are built around student-chosen projects, using a team focus.

- Provide a program that helps students gain a sense of the working world through a job-shadowing experience. Staff plan and develop career pathways based on surveys identifying their students' top career choices and then create appropriate curriculum.

Your ideas

93

Restructuring Leadership, Management and Governance:

Promote collaboration, accountability and shared decision-making

Definition/description

Decentralized decision-making and specific monetary allowances for each teacher to spend on curriculum and instruction is agreed upon through consensus and cooperation. For example, a teacher may propose purchasing a kiln with a portion of the school budget. He or she would teach other teachers and the community to use the kiln, and an after-school pottery/ceramics program for latchkey children might also be provided.

Some options

- Implement site-based decision-making, where all staff members hold membership on at least one of several action teams, for a period of one year. Classified employees, parents and business partners are also on the teams.
- If possible, use staff development days (such as the eight California School Improvement Project student-free days) to create extra weekly planning time throughout the year by dividing them into smaller parts. Some schools accrue pupil-free days by adding ten minutes every other day of the school year, or "bank" time in other ways.
- Hire a consultant or recruit a volunteer who can write funding proposals and/or train the staff to seek outside funding.
- Find a sponsor to organize a large leadership conference in a local hotel or suitable location where at least 100 delegates and members of the school community (staff, students, parents and community people) learn about the school's progress, propose ideas for the year and organize into working committees to carry out tasks.
- Recruit outside consultants, "coaches," who can provide crucial technical assistance in the change process.

Your ideas

RESTRUCTURING LEADERSHIP, MANAGEMENT AND GOVERNANCE:

Provide parent education and empower the community

Definition/description

"Opening the school gates and tearing down the classroom walls" will enable the school to better serve parents and the whole community.

Some options

- Establish parent education programs that offer literacy, computer and ESL courses to get and keep parents involved in their child's education through building appreciation for the schools.
- Foster increased parent involvement through a series of family nights, where students receive credits and community speakers are invited. Ask parents to suggest topics.
- Create a specific parent/community room at school where parents can meet and work.
- Seek out bilingual persons in the community who can concurrently translate for parents during meetings or school events (or perhaps train older students to do the same).
- Arrange engaging childcare for ELL parents during meetings or school events. Appreciate that the presence of children is sometimes inevitable when parental involvement is sought.
- Provide books to take home and keep in communities with few resources.
- Offer training and "book bags" with texts, audio-recording equipment and accompanying activities so parents who are pre-literate can develop reading skills along with their children.
- Ask students to collect information about their families to present at an open-house honoring people of the community.

Your ideas

Restructuring the Professional Life of Teachers:

Implement authentic assessment

Definition/description

Linking how students are evaluated with how and what they are taught is not only a fundamental consideration for many schools, it is an on-going process within restructuring efforts. Reconsidering how students are tested, what they are tested on and creating local tests is a powerful restructuring strategy. However, parents may need to be informed about goals and purposes of any new assessment.

Some options

- Develop authentic assessments for all subjects (portfolios, performance-based, etc.).
- Utilize "electronic portfolios" that use technology such as videos and multimedia software.
- Teach students how to conduct student-led conferences in which they present portfolio evidence to older peers (in November and May) to set and assess performance goals. Students still dominant in their primary language may do this in their stronger language.
- Develop and implement school-wide performance standards in all core subjects, as well as PE and performing arts.

Your ideas

Restructuring the Professional Life of Teachers:

Offer strategic professional development opportunities

Definition/description

Providing school staff with the opportunities to gain the expertise to help all students is a prerequisite for promoting equity. Organizing a well-planned professional development program is an effective restructuring strategy.

Some options

- Plan and implement strategic professional development linked with school goals, such as applying technology to curriculum and instruction.
- Establish a formal program where veteran teachers mentor and coach less experienced colleagues. All staff members volunteer to attend two-week summer technology institutes, where they teach each other how to integrate the newest multimedia software into their core curriculum and instructional strategies.
- Provide collaborative action research techniques for all staff to evaluate curriculum and instruction innovations.
- Institute a program of teacher evaluation that features teacher portfolios, reviewed in teacher-led conferences (peer review/support) and that is then used to assess instructional effectiveness.

Your ideas

RESTRUCTURING THE PROFESSIONAL LIFE OF TEACHERS AND STUDENT EXPERIENCES:

Re-group students

Definition/description

Strategically placing students with peers who can offer particular skills is an effective restructuring option. Students can be mixed or matched within classrooms or across the school.

Some options

- Group students heterogeneously by skill level, ethnicity and maturity into classes, which are then organized into multi-grade families.
- Provide a mix of group settings by grouping students in a particular grade who are taught academic core by a single teamed teacher, in self-contained classrooms. Students mix with other grades for lunch and extracurricular activities.
- Create a single-cycle, year-round school schedule to promote greater academic continuity and extend learning opportunities. Offer off-cycle student enrichment programs such as performing arts courses, computer classes, etc.
- Place students into homogeneous groups within developmentally appropriate classes based on English language skill development for instruction in the language-based subjects. Heterogeneous, multi-age groups are used for instruction in other subjects.
- Establish multi-age student groups that rotate through various classrooms throughout the year. In each classroom, the teachers present different units and curriculum.

Your ideas

Restructuring the Professional Life of Teachers and Student Experiences:

Reform curriculum and instruction

Definition/description

Changing what students learn and how they learn it lies at the heart of restructuring.

Some options

- Implement early literacy interventions, where pre-school and first grade students are provided intensive opportunities to understand, enjoy and discuss reading. Emphasize student writing and student production by establishing a publishing center with the appropriate technology for students to publish their own work.
- Create in-depth, multi-discipline, student-centered multicultural units.
- To alter the way students are taught in the classroom, learn what methods the adults in the community use to teach and assess the knowledge of their children.

Your ideas

Other Resources to Help Plan Schoolwide Changes

Available from Far West Laboratory
[Call (415) 565-3044 for a complete publications list and order form]

On the content of restructuring:

A View from the Bottom Up: School-Based Systemic Reform in California, Volume I: Lessons Learned
Lisa Carlos and Jo Ann Izu, 1995, 60 pages

A View from the Bottom Up: School-Based Systemic Reform in California, Volume II: Ten Profiles
Lisa Carlos, Jo Ann Izu and Robert Linquanti, 1995, 60 pages

Educating English Language Learners: A Review of the Research on School Programs and Classroom Practices
Jorge Cuevas, 1995, 54 pages

Schoolwide Reform: A New Outlook (includes 30-minute video)
Beverly Farr, Sylvie van Heusden Hale, Rose Marie Garcia Fontana, and Jorge Cuevas, 1995, 75 pages

On the process of restructuring:

Focus on School Improvement (includes tools and activities for leadership team)
Sylvie van Heusden Hale & Beverly Farr, 60 pages

Creating Schools for a Community of Diverse Learners: An Action Planning Document (includes tools and activities)
Kathyrn Whealdon, 50 pages, *in press*

Available from other educational organizations

The Unfinished Journey, Restructuring Schools in a Diverse Society
Olsen, et. al., 362 pages
California Tomorrow Publication, (415) 441-7631

An Idea Book for Educators: Implementing Schoolwide Projects
United States Department of Education, (202) 401-0590

For All Students: Limited-English Proficient Student and Goals 2000
National Clearinghouse for Bilingual Education, 1118 22nd Street NW, Washington, D.C. 20037

Selected List of Organizations That Can Offer Restructuring Assistance in Schools with English Language Learners

Far West Laboratory
730 Harrison Street
San Francisco, CA 94107
(415) 565-3000

Southwest Regional Education Center
4665 Lampson Avenue
Los Alamitos, CA 90720
(310) 598-7661

California Tomorrow
Fort Mason Center, Building B
San Francisco, CA 94123
(415) 441-7631

Education for the Future Initiative
400 West First Street
Chico, CA 95929-0230
(916) 898-4482

Bay Area School Reform Collaborative
c/o Far West Laboratory
730 Harrison Street
San Francisco, CA 94107
(415) 241-2740

Los Angeles Metropolitan Project
9300 East Imperial Highway, Room 103
Downey, CA 90242
(310) 922-6123